

**WISCONSIN STATE LAW LIBRARY**  
**Reference Service Policy**  
Adopted 2005

The Wisconsin State Law Library provides a variety of information resources and services to facilitate public access to legal information. Pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes section 757.30 <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0757.pdf> and the American Association of Law Libraries' Ethical Principles [http://www.aallnet.org/about/policy\\_ethics.asp](http://www.aallnet.org/about/policy_ethics.asp), library staff may not perform services that might constitute the unauthorized practice of law.

**What library staff can do for you**

- Assist in locating and using resources related to your legal research topic.
- Assist in locating and using relevant websites.
- Provide links to authoritative web-based resources on current legal topics.  
<http://wsll.state.wi.us/witopicindex.html>
- Provide in-library access to selected subscription-based electronic legal research resources.
- Suggest appropriate government agencies or other organizations as sources of additional information.
- Provide information about agencies and organizations that offer legal assistance.  
<http://wsll.state.wi.us/getstarted/assist.html>
- Verify citations to specific sources of legal authority.
- Provide assistance in obtaining answers to factual questions.
- Provide copies of library materials through our document delivery service.  
<http://wsll.state.wi.us/aboutlib/docdel.html>
- Direct you to resources that will help you learn how to do legal research.
- Refer you to other libraries when this library does not have what you need.

**What library staff cannot do for you**

- Interpret the meaning of sources of legal authority or determine their relevance to your specific situation.
- Give legal advice.
- Advise you of your legal rights.
- Recommend a course of action.
- Assist you in completing forms.
- Recommend a specific attorney to assist you.

## Definitions

Citation	<p>A citation is a reference to legal authorities and precedents such as statutes, cases, regulations, and law review articles. Citations are used in arguments to courts, legal textbooks, law review articles and the like to establish or fortify the propositions argued. (from Boston College Law Library Information Guide #1)</p> <p><a href="http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/research/researchguides/citations/">http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/research/researchguides/citations/</a></p>
Interpret	<p>Explain, clarify or translate a piece of information that is unclear to the person asking the question.</p>
Legal Advice	<p>A recommendation as to what particular action an individual should take given a set of certain circumstances.</p>
Legal Authority	<p>Legal authority is either primary or secondary. A primary legal authority is a case, statute, regulation, or other authority supported by governmental power. A secondary legal authority is a treatise, law review article, or other source that comments on the law but is not supported by governmental power. (from "Guide to Shepardizing," E.H. Butler Library, Buffalo State University)</p> <p><a href="http://www.buffalostate.edu/library/research/subject/shepard.html">http://www.buffalostate.edu/library/research/subject/shepard.html</a></p>
Legal Research	<p>Legal research is a search for statements of the law found in statutes, cases, or other primary sources that can be used to predict how a court would decide a dispute involving a specific fact situation. (from Boston College Law Library Information Guide #11)</p> <p><a href="http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/research/researchguides/nonlaw/">http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/research/researchguides/nonlaw/</a></p>